



Photos by Airman 1st Class Brian Hill

Senior Airman Stephen Perez, 8th Fighter Wing firefighter, works part time as a life guard at the base swimming pool.

Keeping the Wolf Pack above water

Base lifeguards explain intricacies of their part-time job

Becoming a lifeguard at Wolf Pack base swimming pool is a rewarding, but challenging experience. Fourteen of us answered the call to become lifeguards in February. We signed up to become part of a team of professional rescuers.

Instructors from Osan taught two required classes. We started the classes on the Saturday after Memorial Day. Just to enter the class we had to swim 500 meters (about half a mile) non-stop, tread water without the use of our hands for two minutes and recover a ten-pound weight from 11 feet of water.

Needless to say, the class wasn't easy! We endured 12 hour days in the classroom and pool (in extremely cold water).

We had to pass two 50-question tests with an 80 percent or better. One test on lifeguarding and the other on being a professional rescuer.

The self-aid buddy care portion of the class was the easiest part due to our Air Force training. The rescuing skills were only a portion of what we learned. A large percentage was accident prevention.

Four days and a pile of paperwork later, we were ready to keep the "Wolf Pack above water."

Once we became certified lifeguards, it was time to open the pool.

There are three main objectives when opening the pool:

- Making the pool a safe place for you.

- Keeping the Wolf Pack above water, and

- Staying in "lifeguard condition."

Making the pool a safe place begins before any patron steps foot on the deck. It requires following Air Force instructions governing pool operations. We first make sure the pool is clean. Three times during the day we must check the chlorine and pH levels in the pool, making sure they stay within safe levels. We enforce removing outside shoes prior to walking on the deck to keep dirt off the deck and to minimize slipping hazards.

Let me take a moment to address the most popular question we've been asked since the opening of the pool: "What happened to the two diving boards?"

The diving boards were removed for two reasons: Patrons were extending their dives/jumps too far out and ending up in shallow water and injuring themselves. New instruction states the diving well must be at least 16 feet deep to have a diving board. Unfortunately our deepest area is only 11 feet.

Keeping the pool safe and keeping the Wolf Pack above water are our two main objectives, but our third objective is what makes this possible – staying in "lifeguard condition." Every week each



Tech. Sgt. Glen Hall, 35th Fighter Squadron expediter and part-time life guard at the base swimming pool, practices a rescue situation with Tech. Sgt. Richard Egan, 8th Logistics Group Quality Assurance chief inspector, and part-time life guard.

lifeguard must complete a conditioning checklist – including a 500-meter continuous lap swim, treading water for seven minutes (two of which are done without use of our hands), retrieving a 10-lb weight from the deep end and

several rescue exercises.

We keep a high standard in practicing our job in case we have to do our most important task – save your life.

(Submitted by lifeguards Richard Egan and Teni Hodge.)